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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 003631

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR A/S FRIED AND EUR/WE; NSC FOR HADLEY/ANSLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH SPANISH VICE PRESIDENT

Confidential ) entire text.

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11. Ambassador Aguirre paid a previously scheduled courtesy call October 17 on Spanish First Vice President Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega, who, among her many duties, coordinated arrangements for the Ibero-American Summit which Spain hosted in Salamanca October 14-17. In a warm, cordial meeting, Fernandez de la Vega praised the Ambassador for having already made many friends in the Spanish government. She noted excellent US-Spain cooperation on counter-terrorism, security and regional and bilateral issues such as the Middle East and Latin America. Discussion inevitably turned to the weekend's events related to the Summit, during which the Ambassador worked with FM Moratinos to ameliorate language on Cuba, including regarding the Posada Carriles case (septel to follow). She also noted Spanish press coverage of US concerns. De la Vega claimed to the Ambassador that through the entire year of coordinating the various phases of the summit, Cuban issues did not take more than "five minutes" of discussion, as the focus was on other pressing issues such as immigration and natural disasters. However, in the final phase, she said, unnamed "others" raised difficult issues and Spain as host was faced with having to work through these issues.

12. The VP offered herself as an interlocutor with the government and said she wanted to work with the Ambassador on such issues before they got to the press. The Ambassador thanked de la Vega for Spain's role as host and its efforts, through the Foreign Minister, to ameliorate some of the more contentious language in the summit declarations. Ambassador noted he understood Spain's role as a force of moderation throughout the Ibero-American Summit and the difficulties that posed to Spain as the summit's host country. Furthermore the Ambassador noted to the VP he would convey to Washington Spain's helpful role. De la Vega noted the need for loyalty amongst allies. The Ambassador said he understood but that his loyalty was toward ensuring US interests were advanced. He said he welcomed the opportunity to work with the Vice President. Fernandez de la Vega that for her part, she was prepared to move forward with the US on Latin America and other issues.

13. De la Vega told the Ambassador she would like to visit the US sometime in the future. She understood the sensitivities, including whether she would go in order to prepare a meeting between President Bush and President Zapatero. The Ambassador replied that Fernandez de la Vega might find more useful a visit focused on immigration issues, particularly after the crisis in Spain and Morocco over migrants seeking to enter Spain by jumping the security fence between Morocco and the Spanish North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Both agreed there was time to think about any such visit. De la Vega said she would like to explore immigration issues with the Ambassador and offered to arrange a follow-up encounter with him on this subject.

14. Note: Fernandez de la Vega oversees the Spanish Council of Ministers and relations with the Spanish Parliament, as well as Spanish central government relations with regions such as Catalonia and the Basque area. Though she is not directly involved in foreign policy issues, her role often touches on key issues of concern for the US. This was the Ambassador's first meeting with her; as Charge, DCM had met with her in February, 2005. We are sending one of her advisors on an IV program to the US.

AGUIRRE